

Local Schools: Exploring Their History

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Local Schools: Exploring Their History, by Ronald E. Burchart. Nearby History Series 1. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1986. x, 124 pp. Illustrations, suggested readings, bibliographical essay, index. \$11.95 paper.

Local Schools is handsomely illustrated and well written, and is an extremely helpful guide to researching educational history. Authored by an established scholar who has researched schools in every region of the United States, the book's many virtues make it useful for both beginning and advanced students. For beginners, it addresses basic questions: Why local history? Why educational history? How are topics chosen and defined? What questions are posed? Where are materials found? How are materials used critically? For the more advanced, *Local Schools* asks stimulating questions about the nature of schools and the role of education within communities. It has suggested readings for each chapter and a bibliographical essay which list the many valuable, recent contributions to the historiography of American education. The book incorporates the valuable insights of social history on gender, ethnicity, and class. It also provides helpful suggestions on how to use traditional printed and manuscript sources as well as such nontraditional sources as buildings, educational iconography, photographs, and other items of material culture.

For these reasons, *Local Schools* is highly recommended as a guide for those in Iowa and the Midwest who want to research local educational history, or as an assigned textbook for those teaching historical methods to undergraduates. For the latter, nearby history is accessible because it solves the problem of having primary source materials available for students. Educational history in particular is worthy of study for the insight it provides into the central values of American culture.

CONCORDIA COLLEGE

CARROLL ENGELHARDT

Historical Directory of American Agricultural Fairs, by Donald B. Marti. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1986. ix, 300 pp. Notes, bibliographical essay, index. \$55.00 cloth.

July, August, and September are months to go to the fair in Iowa. Donald B. Marti surveys the history of agricultural fairs in the United States, emphasizing their twin aims of education and entertainment. The theme of adaptation to an urban society is an important one for the survival of the fairs. Many fairs in Iowa and other states now benefit from 4-H participation, which helps to maintain the agricultural emphasis in an urban age.

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